



BROOKWOOD
SCHOOL



DEEP ROOTS, BRIGHT FUTURE

STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024

BROOKWOOD
SCHOOL
HAS ALWAYS
BEEN THE
BEST PLACE
TO BECOME
THE BEST
YOU.

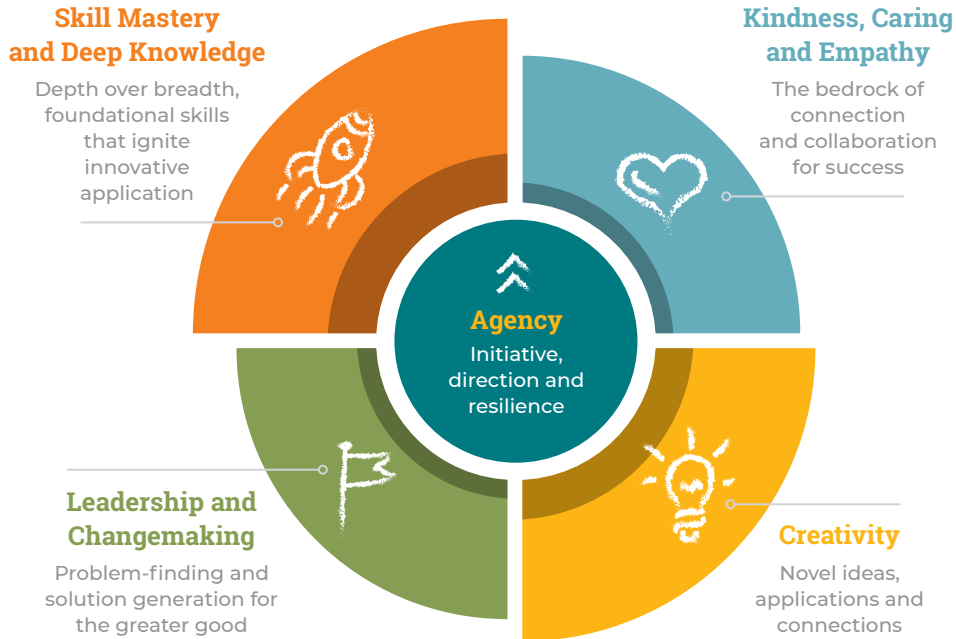
From our earliest beginnings as a school in converted stables to our current, thriving PreK–8 community on a 30-acre wooded campus, we have been steadfast in fulfilling our founding mission: **to graduate children of conscience, character, compassion and cultural competence.**

For decades, our students have excelled in our rigorous academic program because we appreciate what makes each student unique while educating both the mind and heart. We have always known that *how* kids feel determines *whether* they learn; therefore, we intentionally create a culture of connection in which our students feel supported to take frequent risks—and thus achieve more—in their academic, social and personal pursuits. And the research is clear—**confident and happy students thrive.**

Now, as we envision the complex world before us, we know that even well-intentioned schools with broad coursework and competent teachers are not enough to ensure that kids succeed. And given the growth of connectivity, technology and new models of working together combined with such constants as the need for citizenship, kindness and action, we realize schools cannot simply teach for content mastery.

Instead, we see the path to preparation clearly: when kids learn with curiosity, think deeply and take risks, they walk confidently into the future. Our rigorous program helps kids become **innovative creators, ethical leaders, contributing citizens** and **lifelong learners.** Our educational model is anchored by five unifying goals that fuel the growth of each child as a unique individual. This approach—supported by research and born out of decades of successful experience—is rooted in the academic and social-emotional skill building and traditions that have made Brookwood students thrive for over sixty years.

The Brookwood Model for Exemplary Education



The Brookwood model will guide our future investments in teaching and learning and will catalyze a transformative education for our students. Through our deeply inspiring faculty, education will be tailored to children’s talents and needs so that we meet each child where they are and enable them to reach their fullest potential.

We will make education experiential and deep, bringing lessons to life by exploring problems in students’ backyards as well as across the globe. Students will develop skills across grade levels through a thoughtfully sequenced program that challenges them to internalize the approaches, habits and outlooks that will pay back over a lifetime.

*WHETHER CAPTAIN OF THEIR COLLEGE SOCCER TEAM OR THE VISIONARY BEHIND A BIOTECH BREAKTHROUGH,
BROOKWOOD PREPARES KIDS TO LEAD LIVES OF
PURPOSE AND IMPACT.*



THEME ONE



Innovative Program

Design dynamic learning experiences that help our students hone their strengths and become their best selves.

Our students thirst for opportunities to tackle challenges that matter: they are ready to learn and prepared to act. They are intrinsically motivated and intellectually curious, and expect the same from peers and teachers. It is our distinct responsibility to engage our students in thoughtfully constructed growth opportunities that will help them learn how to contribute to their communities: family, classroom, neighborhood and beyond.

Building on our long history of academic excellence and social-emotional strength, we will increase opportunities for all kids to identify and pursue real-world problems and apply their knowledge for the greater good, leverage their strengths and deepen their learning strategies for success, and fortify their ability to lead independent and healthy lives. Supported by our magnificent 30-acre campus of forest, wetlands, pond, creek and turf where we use the outdoors to bring lessons to life, our students will develop life-long healthy attitudes as they hone their skills to thrive in high school and beyond.

THEME ONE

In order to prepare our students, we will:

- ✓ **Create a Center for Leadership and Changemaking to deepen kids' abilities to identify real-world problems and design solutions for the greater good.**

When students engage in problem solving with others, their commitment to meaningful citizenship grows. At Brookwood, we cultivate students as change agents for good. Working closely within our school community and with our community partners, students will become problem-finders and innovative solution-generators who create observable, positive impact. The Center will provide professional development to help faculty successfully engage in this work with students and partner with institutions to make meaningful contributions.



- ✓ **Personalize learning to foster individual excellence, unlock potential and inspire passions.**

Because every student benefits from learning how to plan, organize and learn, we will train all faculty in leading-edge techniques to strengthen executive functioning and equip every student with strategies for success. We also know that the gifts and talents that make each child unique should ignite a passion for learning that extends long into their future. Accordingly, to better support students whose learning profiles require additional direct support to access material and demonstrate knowledge, we will reimagine the delivery of our learning skills program to maximize each child's strengths and best scaffold individual needs. Finally, we will enhance extension and reinforcement opportunities across the curriculum to stretch and support every learner, and we will increase opportunities for student choice to help develop students' passions.



THEME ONE



Build a school-wide wellness program to create a culture of balance and wellbeing while providing kids and families with tools to live healthy lives.

In today's information-saturated and complicated popular culture, we recognize our critical responsibility to help students obtain the information, skills and strategies they need to make healthy decisions for their bodies, hearts and minds. Along with developing a well-sequenced PreK–8 program, we will deepen our parent partnership through a complementary parent education program focused on parenting skills and aspects of healthy child development to empower families to better navigate challenges at school, at home and in the world.



Reimagine our daily schedule to give students and teachers time to explore questions and topics in greater depth and across disciplines.

When students can focus more deeply over longer blocks of time, they can immerse themselves in meaningful work that speaks to their personal passions. In addition, they can create more profound connections to the material and to their learning without the stress of unnecessary transitions and competing demands. We will engage a team of educators to review and redesign how we spend students' time to maximize teaching and learning opportunities for purpose and impact.



Improve the academic and student experience by further strengthening the cohesion and sequencing between grade levels across the school. Our quest for cohesion across grade levels is challenged when there are multiple transition points in a student's PreK–8 experience and when we don't explicitly show how our intentional curriculum enables students to deepen their skills and complexity of thought. Therefore, we will further align our structures and practices, such as our approach to assessment and homework, and create a roadmap of our curricular pathways to ensure that the Brookwood experience best meets children's developmental needs and best reflects our values in every grade level.



THEME TWO



Exceptional Faculty

Empower our faculty to impact Brookwood and beyond.

Inspirational teachers are at the heart of the Brookwood experience. Our culture emphasizes collaboration, inquiry and risk taking, and we invest in recruiting and retaining an exceptional faculty with the skills and ingenuity to design a stellar program. We also recognize that there are numerous students who would thrive in Brookwood’s program but who are not a part of it. Thus, we encourage our faculty to be thought leaders across the educational landscape, positively impacting educators and students beyond our campus as they share the power of Brookwood across the nation.

In order to do this, Brookwood will:



Provide faculty with the resources to be exceptional educators. In addition to ensuring that faculty are compensated competitively, we are committed to cultivating an environment in which faculty are both mentors and students themselves and benefit from in-depth field study, training in emerging educational techniques, and robust professional growth cohorts. We will demonstrate that Brookwood is a place where students are not the only exuberant learners.

THEME TWO

- ✔ **Cultivate faculty as thought leaders and encourage them to share their expertise broadly for the public good.** We will help position our faculty as thought leaders in the educational landscape. Through conference presentations, media and collegial exchange where faculty share achievements and engage in dialogue, they will positively impact educators and students beyond our campus while demonstrating the impact of a Brookwood education and how our approaches can benefit kids and teachers more broadly.
- ✔ **Present Brookwood as a sought-after destination for educators.** We will continue to cultivate a diverse pipeline of talent who wish to make Brookwood their home. We will differentiate our recruiting strategies and ensure that we are supporting our faculty in a variety of ways, from carefully nurturing our employee culture to fortifying our existing Teaching Apprentice Program, which provides year-long practicums for beginning teachers pursuing their Master's degrees.





THEME THREE



Inclusive Community

*Foster dialogue across
lines of difference and
actively pursue diversity,
equity and inclusion.*

Brookwood was founded on the research-backed idea that our community is strongest—and learning outcomes are greatest—when comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences and points of view. This concept is deeply rooted in our curriculum and culture, from small daily gestures like greeting students by name to the literacy focus on windows and mirrors through which students explore people of different and similar backgrounds to themselves.

Because our students must be able to work with people whose backgrounds are different from their own, now is the time to ensure that our kids are well-prepared to contribute to and thrive in increasingly global and diverse communities. Brookwood is committed to fortifying this aptitude in our students and staff and to having a larger number of diverse students, families and employees in our school in order to be a more inclusive, connected community where we all thrive.

Amplifying diversity of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, physical ability, culture, religion and family structure together with a diversity of perspectives, skills, learning styles and expertise is critical to preparing students to be successful in the world today... and tomorrow.

THEME THREE

Accordingly, Brookwood will:



Deepen the capacity for constructive dialogue across lines of difference. We will bolster curricular components to help students refine their skills of critical discourse, listening for understanding, respectfully advocating their point of view, and deepening understanding of people and experiences unlike their own. To do so, we will help faculty and staff more deeply understand their own perspectives in order to better facilitate conversations in the classroom. Because understanding others begins with a deep understanding of one's self, employees will further explore their own beliefs and hone their facilitation skills to hold space for all perspectives and most effectively coach students in communicating across lines of difference.



THEME THREE



Research and implement best practices for hiring and retaining diverse faculty and staff; increase the percentage of diverse employees, especially people of color, to expand the range of voices in our classrooms. We recognize that attaining this goal is not just a matter of will, but of proactive outreach and attuned hiring practices. We will also strive to better understand and support the experiences of diverse faculty and staff within our employee culture.



Better understand the experience of our diverse students and families in order to ensure that they are thoughtfully included in our community; increase the percentage of students and families reflecting all forms of diversity. While diversity benefits all students, we want to ensure that first and foremost, our approach serves diverse students, families, faculty and staff themselves.



Build partnerships that allow our students to spend meaningful time working in communities that look and feel different than Brookwood. Diverse communities are both far afield and very close to home. Through our project-based learning and other strategic outreach, we will increase our engagement with these communities, not as brief tourists but as learners and partners who develop empathy and understanding of others' circumstances and outlooks.






THEME FOUR

Affordability
Address Brookwood's affordability to increase access and ensure the school's long-term health.

We believe passionately in the value of a Brookwood education. We also recognize that the rising price of independent school education and changing market dynamics have made it harder for families to afford this kind of investment. Thus, we must ensure accessibility, market competitiveness and long-term financial viability in today's world while continuing to strategically improve our exemplary program.

In order to do this, Brookwood will:

-  **Evaluate and modify our tuition structure, financial aid policy and cost structure in order to deliver a top-notch Brookwood education at a price that more members of the community can afford.** Using the in-depth work done in 2018 with the Strategic Pricing Task Force and Board of Trustees, we will rigorously vet our financial model and develop options to increase affordability and access and ensure the school's long-term health. We will also continue to examine our cost structure to ensure that resources remain best deployed to enhance our program.

THEME FOUR

- ✓ **Increase our endowment for financial aid to support our strategic focus to increase access.** At a time when the price of independent school challenges many families, we will bolster our financial aid program to be a more permanently sustainable part of our financial model.
- ✓ **Build a culture of philanthropy across constituencies that inspires future participation.** Because robust fundraising is a cornerstone of a sound financial model, we will cultivate our community, re-energize our donor base, communicate a compelling message about the school, and celebrate how philanthropy has contributed to Brookwood's success.
- ✓ **Invest in mission-aligned, non-tuition revenue opportunities that leverage current personnel and physical assets.** We have a magnificent campus, a powerful brand and a remarkable staff. If we maximize these assets entrepreneurially and increase revenue from non-tuition sources that are aligned with our mission, we will reduce tuition dependence and thus increase the health of our financial model.



Bringing the Plan to Life



A strategy is only as good as its implementation.

We will pay close attention to the strategic plan's execution, not just at the outset but through its life until 2024. While the mechanisms will evolve over time as we move from initial priorities to longer-term initiatives, the strategic plan outline will remain constant. To bring this strategy to life, we will:

- ▶ Create a cross-functional team to set priorities and put budget numbers against activities.
- ▶ Create an implementation plan with timelines for lead initiatives and appoint implementation teams for their execution.
- ▶ Determine how initiatives will work together and the implications of that for their timing.
- ▶ Establish metrics to measure progress to date.
- ▶ Take stock of progress at quarterly administrative Leadership Team meetings and at the Board of Trustees' annual strategy retreat.
- ▶ Communicate progress to Brookwood community at regular intervals.

Conclusion



For over six decades, Brookwood’s model has served us well, and yet—like our students—our school is made for growth. Although our values have stayed consistent since our founding in 1956, our priorities and methods have evolved to serve the present and now are aligning to propel us into the future.

Building on our rich tradition of academic excellence and social-emotional strength, we will take clear steps to move boldly forward. We will engage students as leaders and changemakers, personalize learning for every student and strengthen our culture of wellness. We will redesign how we spend students’ time and increase the cohesion throughout our program. We will empower our exceptional faculty and encourage them to share their impact more broadly. We will strengthen our inclusive community, and finally, we will ensure the financial sustainability of our beloved school.

Please join us in making this a reality! Learn more at strategicplan.brookwood.edu.

Appendix

Why have a strategic plan?

Brookwood teems with opportunity. We have an abundance of creative ideas to make learning deep, engaging and enduring. We also have a student body and staff that can achieve phenomenal results through ingenuity, careful research, passion and hard work. Yet these remarkable assets require us to prioritize and focus. To be truly outstanding in what we do, Brookwood needs a clear compass heading—a well-defined route to be the best place for kids to become their best selves. Our strategic plan provides that guidance.

How we got here

In 2012, Brookwood completed its last strategic plan which provided important guidance over the past six years. It prioritized critical investments in a new Lower School, global education and project-based learning that stand today as pillars of the school's identity and student experience.

In 2015, Brookwood welcomed Laura Caron as its new Head of School and renewed its commitment to leading elementary education on Boston's North Shore and beyond. As Brookwood's needs and opportunities became clearer, Caron launched the current strategic planning process in 2017 to propel Brookwood into its next chapter.

For the past year, the Brookwood community has been highly engaged in crafting the underpinnings of this plan. We have involved parents, educators trustees, students, alumni and community members in both informal engagements and intensive sessions to set priorities and generate ideas. Our work has included interviewing exemplary schools, researching the skills that will be critical for a changing world, understanding the views of prospective parents, mapping trends in our local marketplace, surveying and conducting focus groups with our parent body, shadowing students through the school day, and participating in a community-wide design day to imagine possibilities and prototype solutions. As a result, our plan is the product of inputs from well over 300 people. Through our highly inclusive, design-thinking approach, the message was clear: differentiate our innovative program, invest in faculty, deepen our inclusive community and make affordability more sustainable.

Appendix

Special thanks go to our tremendous Board of Trustees and our intrepid Strategic Planning Team, a mix of committed parents, faculty, staff, trustees and other Brookwood friends who conscientiously shaped the process and helped us get to where we are today. Thank you!

2017–2019 Board of Trustees

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Strategic Planning Team

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*Strategic Planning Steering Committee